

Christian Aid submission to the APPG for Africa's call for written evidence for new policy inquiry: UK-African Partnerships for Just Energy Transitions in Africa

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To be submitted to Hetty Bailey-Morgan (Secretariat to the inquiry and APPG for Africa) at hb28@soas.ac.uk

Dear members of the APPG for Africa

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to your call for written evidence on UK-African Partnerships for Just Energy Transitions in Africa. Christian Aid's global strategy, Standing Together, sets out the three pillars of our approach: to reach those in extreme poverty; address the power inequalities that are root causes of poverty; and build local and collective agency to enable people to claim their rights.

A just and equitable energy transition would be one that both respects and fulfills human rights, prioritises the most marginalized, reduces inequalities within and between countries, transforms gender dynamics and minimizes adverse environmental impacts. However, transformational change is needed. As highlighted in our upcoming report, Getting Down to Business: putting human Rights at the heart of the Just Energy Transition, there is a danger, otherwise, that the transition to renewable energy perpetuates colonial, extractive and unequalising models of development that characterise fossil fuel energy systems. Our submission builds on our research and programme experience in Africa to highlight some of the actions governments can take to mitigate the risks and maximise the benefits.

Christian Aid has long been an advocate for climate and economic justice on the African continent. We work in ten African countries in partnership with local organisations implementing responses for climate change adaptation and to build resilient communities, including responses to scale up access to sustainable renewable energy. We also have teams working at the Africa regional level, collaborating in advocacy with regional African civil society organisations, networks and movements; and globally, with international partners, to advocate a just and equitable energy transition and for sufficient quality finance for sustainable development, including multilateral climate finance.

The concerns of our partners, and evidence generated by them, have informed responses we offer to the inquiry (questions 1,2,6,7,8 and 9) below.

Executive summary

A just and equitable energy transition for Africa would be one that builds resilience, devolves power and progresses the rights of energy poor and climate vulnerable communities, supported by sufficient, quality, and gender responsive public finance and an accountable private sector that respects rights and contributes to sustainable and equitable development. The African continent is where energy poverty is most acute, with gendered implications. To address these issues more priority should be given to enabling and supporting decentralized/distributed renewable energy approaches that are effective in meeting the needs of energy poor communities, support public service provision and democratise decision-making.

Consistency with global climate targets and development needs demands that there should be no further investment in fossil fuels and a focus on *sustainable* approaches to *renewable* energy that minimize any adverse social and environmental impacts and intentionally contribute to fulfillment of human rights of people living in poverty, including through measures that enable communities to enjoy a share of the benefits.

Transparent and accountable energy governance is critical to ensuring that both public and private investment in renewable energy is consistent with human rights, national development priorities, and emissions reduction targets. There are risks associated with public-private partnerships (PPPs) for and other blended financing of energy projects. A greater focus on public investment (domestic, bilateral and multilateral) is needed to keep social justice priorities at the forefront, directed to sustainable renewables and where possible locally led approaches, applied in a way that complies with principles of equity, democracy, accountability and human rights. We recommend that states adopt mandatory regulations imposing clear duties and responsibilities to prevent and address adverse impacts on human rights and the environment contributed by renewable energy and related industries; and support a UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights.

The UK government should:

- a) Ensure policy coherence with human rights and a just and equitable transition, including by supporting the UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights.
- b) Regulate UK public and private sectors through a new Business, Human Rights and Environmental Act to hold them to account when they fail to prevent human rights abuses and environmental harms in their global supply chains.
- c) Conduct regular human rights and environmental spill-over analyses of all international trade, debt and taxation agreements to which the UK is a party to ensure economic policies are coherent with international human rights law and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- d) Support climate vulnerable countries to finance adequate responses for resilience and adaptation including through decentralised renewable energy solutions for people living in poverty.
- e) Pass legislation to incentivise private creditors to take part in debt relief.
- f) Provide climate finance in the form of grants and persuade other richer countries to do likewise.
- g) Recognise its obligation to contribute its fair share of funding for the Loss and Damage Fund based on the polluter pays principle and commit to full and transparent participation in the new collective quantified goal for climate finance.
- h) Be more intentional in prioritising development impacts, particularly for women and marginalised groups, in British International Investment and British Investment Partnerships' operations. In the meantime, UK aid contributions to British International Investment should be halted.

Detailed responses by inquiry questions:

Question 1: How to address the challenges of energy poverty in Africa in line with the continent's development needs, the principles of a just transition and continental and global climate targets for emissions reduction

- i. The African continent is where energy poverty is most acute. An estimated 670 million people will remain without any electricity by 2030.ⁱ In addressing this more priority should be given to enabling and supporting decentralized/distributed renewable energy (DRE) approaches.** Energy access is a prerequisite for fulfilling many human rights including to health, water and food, progress towards which is at risk in countries bearing the brunt of climate change, with gendered implications because of the greater share of responsibility for household provisioning borne by women and deficits in sexual and reproductive health services, particularly in rural areas.ⁱⁱ It is therefore an urgent gender and human rights issue. In our experience, decentralised/distributed renewable energy (DRE) technologies such as solar mini-gridsⁱⁱⁱ provide effective solutions in areas unreached or underserved by grid connections.^{iv} These can be an effective use of limited public funds. In Kenya, analysis of rural electrification suggested that using decentralised electrification in addition to grid extension would have resulted in a 9.2 percent higher rate of electrification than grid extension alone at the same cost.^v Programmes to promote uptake and diffusion of household DRE systems are also needed. One example is Kenya's Off-grid Solar Access Programme.^{vi} Supportive policies may include devolution of public finance for energy access, support for business in DRE sectors, and progressive tax policies such as removal of import tariffs for essential components and indirect taxes on consumer DRE products.
- ii. Decentralising how energy is produced and distributed can democratise decision-making, potentially avoiding some of the social and environmental risks more centralised approaches can pose.** Some African communities have been inadequately consulted and experienced adverse impacts (such as land alienation) in centrally planned renewable energy initiatives, such as Kenya's Lake Turkana Wind Power Project, which has brought very limited benefits to affected communities in terms of electricity access.^{vii} Decentralised mechanism such as Kenya's Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Corporation, mandated to establish county-level energy centres and develop appropriate local capacity for renewable technologies alongside Kenya's two-tier (national and county level) system of governance, provide better opportunities for citizens to engage in decision making towards meeting energy targets.^{viii}
- iii. Local ownership can also support sustainability and meet diverse needs.** In Ethiopia,^{ix} we are piloting small-scale 'run-of-river' systems for electricity generation, irrigation and milling, in collaboration with subnational government, the Arba Minch Institute of Technology, community groups and businesses. Such collaborations can support participatory research and design, help to meet a range of energy needs and make the most of limited natural resources. In this case, Ethiopian policies supportive of community managed development projects^x provided a good basis. Other enabling national policies, such as mechanisms to decentralize energy planning and resourcing and to facilitate community participation in research and development could help support more such approaches to address neglected energy needs and contribute to sustainable natural resource management.^{xi}
- iv. DRE can help transform unequal power relationships and progress rights of women and marginalised groups.^{xii}** Enabling individuals and smaller enterprises to become producers of energy or providers of energy services improves livelihoods and develops local economies. Our Breaking the Barriers programme, which supported women's groups to establish renewable energy enterprises in

Ethiopia, Malawi and Burkina Faso,^{xiii} also encouraged development of locally appropriate technologies, increased incomes and promoted gender equality. Additionally, female energy entrepreneurs are well placed to accelerate distribution and uptake of DRE among 'last mile' communities.^{xiv}

- v. **Consistency with global climate targets and development needs demands that there should be no further investment in fossil fuels and a focus on sustainable approaches to renewable energy.** Our African partners do not consider development of fossil gas on the continent to be sustainable or coherent with mitigation imperatives or energy access priorities.^{xv} When it comes to renewables, sustainability, access and equity must be at the forefront of decision-making regarding the types, location and scale of technologies deployed, taking account of different social and economic contexts and environmental factors. Sustainable land use and land rights remain key issues especially for large-scale land-based wind and solar, alongside a need for more measures to ensure local communities enjoy a share of the benefits. Kenya's Kipeto Wind Farm, which enabled local people to lease land to the project and benefit from lease payments and a percentage of annual revenue for each wind turbine located in their land^{xvi} is one such model. However, the beneficiaries were people who had individualized land rights. Where communities have collective or customary land rights these must also be respected.

Question 2: The benefits and threats to Africa from the global clean energy transition and the national and international factors enabling and constraining the supply of clean energy and improved energy access.

- vi. **Without adequate regulation (including with respect to transparency, human rights due diligence, pricing and taxation) there are risks that private investment in energy and related industries (such as mining for transitional minerals) further concentrates wealth in the hands of a few transnational corporations and entrenches inequalities both within and among countries.** Our research in Brazil regarding mining for bauxite (an important transition mineral used, among other things, to produce electric vehicles in Europe) illustrates the risks that such industries exacerbate inequalities, including by draining public resources through (often unnecessary) tax incentives while having devastating impacts such through deforestation and water pollution, that directly impact the rights of marginalised communities. Thus, without adequate regulation the economic benefits accrue mainly to corporations while the costs are borne disproportionately by people living in poverty^{xvii}.
- vii. **Potential benefits of a just and equitable energy transition 'done right' include improved energy access through more affordable and stable supplies of energy, and opportunities for economic diversification to create green jobs by nurturing African renewable energy industries.** The benefits will be maximized if the needs of energy poor households and of public services are put at the forefront, because of the multiple benefits to human rights and the care economy for which energy access is a prerequisite.
- viii. **The benefits to women's rights and gender equality should be highlighted and amplified,** including by enhancing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, meeting women's business and domestic energy needs, and producing sustainable renewable energy to power public services. Opportunities for women's rights organisations to influence associated policies and practices to ensure more sustainable and gender responsive energy services and an enabling environment for these are important, alongside attention to addressing gendered inequalities in unpaid care responsibilities. The energy transition is also an opportunity to address barriers to women's employment within energy

sectors, for example, by challenging stereotypes of what are 'suitable' jobs for women; enhancing technical training opportunities; and ensuring gender responsive workplace health and safety.^{xviii}

Question 6: The role and limitations of Private and Public finance in supporting and delivering the clean energy transition. How can providers ensure that their finance and investments contribute to a just energy transition and mitigate an associated environmental or social harms that might arise.

- ix. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) for energy projects pose risks unless adequate measures are taken to ensure cost effectiveness, efficiency and transparency, and to guard against human rights abuses.** Energy PPPs can heighten any existing issues of inadequate management, regulation or corruption; transfer hidden costs and risks to consumers; and aggravate fiscal constraints. The use of financial intermediaries may aggravate a lack of accountability to citizens; and reorientation of domestic laws to accommodate private investors can result in adverse ecological and social consequences.^{xix} Popular with African governments keen to harness private resources for infrastructure projects, PPPs are often longstanding arrangements that may become burdensome where conditions become less favourable, so transparency and accountability around the long-term costs and associated debt is essential.^{xx} The implications for fiscal space to fulfil rights should be at the forefront of decision-making.^{xxi} Eurodad recommends that decisions on whether to use blending should 'rest with the citizens of countries in the global South, not with donors; and the voices of those who have been 'left behind', including marginalised women and persons with disabilities, should be given particular attention'. It also recommends that if by these standards blended finance is judged to be the optimal financing method, donors and development finance institutions should put in place all the necessary measures to ensure that it fulfils human rights obligations, including obligations on the rights of marginalised groups, specifically targeting those who have been left behind, and measures for transparency and accountability.^{xxii}
- x. Initiatives such as Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) which aim to leverage private sector investment in a just transition, should not replace but rather complement public investment and keep social justice priorities at the forefront.** Governments and donors should guard against approaches that weaken human rights accountability to citizens. South Africa's JETP Investment Plan (JETP IP) required \$86 billion for its full implementation, with just \$330 million financing offered by the International Partnership Group (and only 4% of this as grants) there is a risk that social justice elements may be sidelined, while unsustainable debt may also be incurred. Our partners are also concerned about heavy influence of approaches, such as privatisation or weakening of labour protections, that could be detrimental to a just transition^{xxiii}. Again, enhancing transparency to ensure such country platforms are truly delivering for all is essential.^{xxiv}
- xi. Increased public finance (domestic, bilateral and multilateral) should be directed to sustainable renewables.** With adequate transparency, public scrutiny and downward accountability, public finance should be more coherent with a just and equitable transition. While the inadequacy of current lending through bilateral official development assistance and multilateral development banks has been estimated to be less than 10% what's needed,^{xxv} low-income countries and emerging economies need not just more, but also better-quality public finance (concessional loans or grants). Shifting public investment out of fossil fuels and into renewables way to find this.^{xxvi} Multilateral development banks should phase out all direct and indirect finance to fossil fuels.^{xxvii} In many African countries domestic resources finance most measures for climate mitigation and resilience. Wealthy countries need to do much more to support them, alongside grant and better-quality financing, through action to minimise

debt burdens. At national level, progressive taxation and redirection of subsidies on consumption and production of fossil fuels to sustainable renewable energy would also help alleviate fiscal constraints, however the latter will need to be sensitive to the distributional impacts, including by substituting alternative public services or social protection measures for low-income households.

Question 7: How can African states' governance, legal, policy and financial frameworks best support a just and developmentally friendly energy transition, and how can countries made dependent of fossil fuels make the transition?

- xii. Transparent and accountable energy governance is critical to ensuring that public and private investment in renewable energy is consistent with human rights, national development priorities, and emissions reduction targets.** Governments should take steps to create an enabling environment for the diffusion and uptake of technologies for generating and distributing sustainable renewable energy, including to facilitate the local manufacture of components where this can contribute to green jobs and economic diversification. Enabling fiscal policies for off-grid clean energy products, industry standards and certification for quality assurance and ease of doing business for smaller entrepreneurs may all be important. Our partners, such as Power Shift Africa, have highlighted a need for collaboration between civil society and government actors to determine what is needed and to directly support energy access and the needs of marginalised communities, including in adapting or becoming more resilient to climate risks^{xxviii}.
- xiii. States should ensure meaningful participation and influence of women and marginalised groups, with a specific focus on indigenous communities, in the design and implementation of policies and actions relating to energy and related sectors.** This includes ensuring free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) for any development through meaningful consultations with potentially affected communities, as provided for in international human rights frameworks^{xxix} and ensuring that channels are created for dialogue and negotiation between local communities, including women leaders, throughout the life cycle of projects. State regulations should also set explicit requirements for reporting on the implementation of consultation necessary for FPIC.
- xiv. States should also take steps, including by allocating additional resources, expertise and oversight, to enforce legal protections for local communities impacted by energy and related developments,** with a focus on gendered impacts, such as impacts on gender-based violence, ensuring that the right to effective, accessible remedy is protected and fulfilled; and dedicate resources to ensure protection for women human rights defenders, union representatives, social leaders and environmental activists working to protect rights.
- xv. States should adopt mandatory regulations imposing clear duties to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts on human rights and the environment contributed by renewable energy and related industries.** These should provide for a corporate duty to conduct human rights and environmental due diligence and to 'take appropriate action' in relation to businesses' own operations and those of business partners; and for independent assessment and documentation of environmental, social, gender and human rights impacts. Regulations should set a corporate duty to report sufficient information on company supply chains, to enable public scrutiny. Strong governance structures should be put in place to design, implement and enforce policies to regulate and where necessary sanction energy and related industries, including in areas such as permitting, land rights and use, taxation and waste management. This should also include setting and effectively implementing robust standards

on ex-ante environmental and human rights impact assessments, including gender impact assessments. Finally, regulatory criteria regarding government procurement should be updated to include both incentives and exclusion clauses linked to businesses' human rights records overseas, including through their supply chains.

- xvi. **We recommend states support a UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights.** We call on governments to constructively engage with the Binding Treaty negotiations.
- xvii. **To ensure a just exit from fossil fuel extraction, helpful provisions include** mechanisms to enable existing employees and wider communities to engage in decision making processes and access training to gain new and relevant skills for employment in renewable energy and related industries; effective social protection measures; and economic diversification to create new employment opportunities in energy and related industries. Such measures should form part of a transformative economic and social plan and a wider commitment to stop extracting fossil fuels.

Question 8: The changes needed to UK government policy in relation to domestic mitigation, climate finance, trade and investment, business regulation policies to better support just transition.

- xviii. **UK government policy should be coherent with human rights and a just and equitable transition, including by supporting the establishment of a global UN binding treaty on business and human rights and by introducing national legislation.** Our experience has been that the largely voluntary approach adopted in national and international frameworks aimed at ensuring human rights protection in the context of business operations, including energy and related industries, is wholly inadequate to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts on human rights and the environment.^{xxx} In addition to supporting the UN binding treaty on business and human rights, the UK should also put in place national legislation to regulate for human rights due diligence of UK companies in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and with explicit recognition of extra-territorial human rights obligations in the context of private sector activities. Alongside our partners in the Corporate Justice Coalition, we recommend the UK government puts in place a new legal requirement to hold public and private sectors to account when they fail to prevent supply chain human rights abuses and environmental harms, via 'Business, Human Rights and Environment Act'.^{xxxi}
- xix. **The UK should also conduct regular human rights and environmental spill-over analyses of all international trade, debt and taxation agreements to which the UK is a party and rectify inconsistencies between state obligations under international human rights law and the Paris Climate Agreement on the one hand, and economic policies on the other.** This should include positions the UK government takes up in the decision-making bodies of intergovernmental organisations and international finance institutions, which require strengthened human rights accountability mechanisms.
- xx. **The United Kingdom as a leading historic greenhouse gas emitter bears a responsibility to support climate vulnerable countries finance adequate responses for resilience, adaptation and social protection, including by addressing unsustainable debt.** Sovereign debt is both exacerbated by climate change impacts and a drain on public resources needed to mitigate these, yet most climate finance is being provided in the form of loans. The UK government should provide climate finance in the form of grants and persuade other richer countries to do likewise. It should also support debt relief for all climate vulnerable and low-income countries by taking a lead in addressing the escalating risks posed by sovereign debt held by private creditors. These have ignored repeated calls to

participate in debt relief arrangements.^{xxxii} As 90% of bonds issued by countries eligible for the failed Common Framework for Debt Treatments are governed by English Law, the UK should pass legislation to incentivise private creditors to take part in debt relief.^{xxxiii} It should also recognise its obligation to contribute its fair share of funding for the Loss and Damage Fund based on the polluter pays principle, and commit to full and transparent participation in the new collective quantified goal for climate finance.

- xxi. British International Investment and British Investment Partnerships' significant operations in Africa should be more intentional in measuring and prioritising development impacts, particularly the benefits to women and marginalised groups.** The costs and benefits of energy and related investments to human rights, environmental integrity and ecosystem services should be comprehensively and independently evaluated, including by providing for much greater transparency and feedback from affected communities. In the meantime, UK aid contributions to British International Investment should be halted.

Question 9: The changes needed to the policies of multilateral institutions and development banks for them to best better support a just, sustainable, and developmental energy transition for Africa.

- xxii. IFI's and multilateral organisations should do more to support public financing models and refocus on the need to achieve development outcomes as a priority.** The capacity of blended finance to bridge financing gaps is often overestimated^{xxxiv} and may fail to support pro-poor activities, align with national development priorities or adequately incorporate transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation.^{xxxv} Enhanced measures are needed to support the availability of public finance, cancellation of unsustainable public external debt payments; establishment of a multilateral framework for debt crisis prevention and resolution; and measures to curb corporate tax avoidance and evasion and to enhance domestic resource mobilization.
- xxiii. IFI's and multilateral organisations must stop financing fossil fuel projects including through financial intermediary (FO) investments.** FOs delegate responsibility to manage social and environmental impacts of projects and investments to clients, such as commercial banks, private equity funds, or non-banking financial institutions, thus reducing accountability and transparency. Enhanced direct support for sustainable renewables is needed, avoiding projects that can have unacceptable social and environmental impacts (such as large hydropower).^{xxxvi}

ⁱ [Energy Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank](#)

ⁱⁱ See for example Christian Aid's experience in Kenya: [low-carbon-africa-kenya-november-2011.pdf \(christianaid.org.uk\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [2019 - Mini Grids for Half a Billion People: Market Outlook and Handbook for Decision Makers | Executive Summary | ESMAP](#)

^{iv} [Low-carbon Africa: leapfrogging to a green future \(globalccsinstitute.com\)](#)

^v Rural electrification subsidy estimation: a special model development and case study, Lefu Maqelepo *et al*, November 2022

[Rural electrification subsidy estimation: a spatial model development and case study - IOPscience](#)

^{vi} [Energy-Act-analysis-Final.pdf \(access-coalition.org\)](#)

^{vii} Indigenous Peoples and Renewable Energy Projects in Kenya, Dr.A.Osano, 2021

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- [\(PDF\) Indigenous Peoples and Renewable Energy Projects in Kenya \(researchgate.net\)](#)
- viii [Prioritizing Electrification and Clean Cooking in Kenya: Energy Act 2019 - Alliance of Civil Society Organisations for Clean Energy Access \(access-coalition.org\)](#)
- ix [Ethiopia completes third filling of Blue Nile mega-dam reservoir | News | Al Jazeera](#)
- x [Community Managed Project \(CMP\) Approach - CMP CoWASH Ethiopia \(cmpethiopia.org\)](#)
- xi [Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2022,](#)
- xii [Women on the Frontline](#)
- xiii [Breaking the Barriers - Christian Aid](#)
- xiv [Supporting-Last-Mile-Women-Entrepreneurs.pdf \(energia.org\)](#)
- xv [Letter to African Leaders — Don't Gas Africa \(dont-gas-africa.org\)](#)
- xvi [5-report-kenya-n-pw.pdf \(boell.org\)](#)
- xvii [Profit before People and Planet - Christian Aid](#)
- xviii [Call to Action: Gender Equality in the Renewable Energy Industry | WEPS](#)
- xix [PPPs in energy infrastructure: regional experiences in light of the global energy crisis - Eurodad](#)
- xx [AFRODAD-COMBINED-CHARTER.pdf](#)
- xxi [PPPs in energy infrastructure: regional experiences in light of the global energy crisis - Eurodad](#)
- xxii [Mixed messages.pdf \(nationbuilder.com\)](#)
- xxiii [World Bank and IMF influence casts shadow over South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership - Bretton Woods Project](#)
- xxiv [5 Lessons from South Africa's Just Transition Journey | World Resources Institute South Africa's Just Transition | World Resources Institute \(wri.org\)](#)
- xxv An estimated 1\$ trillion annually by 2030 to finance the energy transition in emerging markets and developing countries other than China, half of which is needed in Africa. [IHLEG-Finance-for-Climate-Action-1.pdf \(lse.ac.uk\)](#) pp 26, 33 and 44
- xxvi [Harnessing-Public-Finance-Potential-to-Crete-RE-Economies.pdf \(ciel.org\)](#)
- xxvii [The Big Shift Global](#)
- xxviii [Reviewing-Africas-Renewable-Energy-Initiative_1638879002.pdf \(powershiftafrica.org\)](#)
- xxix Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' Convention (ILO Convention No. 169) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples | Division for Inclusive Social Development \(DISD\)](#)
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- xxx [cerrejon-report.pdf \(christianaid.ie\)](#)
- xxxi [A 'Business, Human Rights and Environment Act' - Principal Elements • Corporate Justice Coalition](#)
- xxxii [Risky business - Christian Aid](#)
- xxxiii [Parliamentary Briefing.pdf \(ctfassets.net\)](#)
- xxxiv [12666.pdf \(odi.org\)](#)
- xxxv [Blended Finance: What it is, how it works and how it is used \(d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net\)](#)
- xxxvi [Paris-Alignment-Principles-What-IFIs-need-to-do-to-align-their-financial-intermediary-investments-with-Paris-and-tackle-climate-change.pdf \(re-course.org\)](#)